



Joseph Luten *
Oral History Transcription
March 14, 2012

Interviewed by: Dr. Monica Tetzlaff, Indiana University South Bend; Marsha [last name unknown]

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Approximate length of interview: 50 minutes

Transcribed by: Mark Flora, Civil Rights Heritage Center

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Summary: Joseph Luten grew up in South Bend and served in the navy during World War II. He then played basketball for a scholarship to Central State University. Leaving behind his engineering dreams after being told there weren't black engineers, he returned to South Bend with his new wife, Della, where they both became teachers in the public school system. Joseph went on to become a principal and Della started the first black daycare center in the state of Indiana.

* In the audio file containing this interview, at 46:33 the sound ended and at 46:44 it restarted containing a repeat of audio from earlier. At 1:15:22 the audio continued again, picking up where it left off at 46:33. This transcript uses an edited audio file that removes the repeated audio and unites the two disparate clips together. No significant information was removed. The original, unedited audio file is available upon request.

- 0:00:00 [Monica Tetzlaff]: Too loud. [sounds of messing with the microphone]
Good. Well, I'll get started. My question is—just start off by telling me a little bit about your brother Alex or Alexander.
- 0:00:36 [Joseph Luten]: Well, he's a great guy. How long has Alex been dead though?
- [Della Luten]: My gosh...
- [JL]: Quite a bit.
- [DL]: About ten years? Would you say?
- [JL]: I'd say twelve years. Maybe a little longer. Anyways, we were a family. We were born right by the natatorium. Lived in that area all my life, you know? My brother and I and all of us played up and down the alleys by the natatorium along Washington Street. That's the area we were born in. I came from a family that really believed in education.
- 0:01:10 [DL]: Yes
- [JL]: It was five of us: three girls and two guys, myself and my brother. My dad worked at Studebaker and he had been there forty-some years, but he insisted that we go to college and get an education. At that time, I don't know if you know or not, but South Bend wasn't really the best in the world for encouraging—"no black students" schools and all that, so we had nothing. We really looked up, but nobody pushing you, so you had to be—if you weren't motivated at home, you didn't get much motivation, especially for higher education.
- 0:01:47 My brother and I were real close because we played together: ball, everything, and all of us were very musical, except myself. I couldn't play anything, but my sisters played the piano, my brother played the piano. He played tuba in the band. He went into Tuskegee Institute. Before that, we both had gone into the service. I graduated from school in '43 and he was about two years ahead of me. He finished school about 1941.
- 0:02:25 He went into the army and he always encouraged me to go. "Don't come this way," he said. "Go to the navy." He said, "If you gotta go in the draft, don't come to the army." He didn't like it at all, but he encouraged me not to go to the army. Go to the navy, so when I graduated in '43, that's what I did. I joined the navy. Here I was, I lived about two blocks from the natatorium.

0:02:52 My dad worked hard. I'll never forget him. He worked at Studebaker. I'd go out there, I'd take his hot lunch. My mother would fix a hot lunch; I'd take it to him and sometimes he'd come out of that foundry, I couldn't even recognize him. You know, dust and smut and so on.

But I had two great parents. My mom and dad, they encouraged us. We were poor, but they always thought we rich and they always encouraged. We were very churchy. Every Sunday, you had to go to church and when you went to church, you stayed all day, just about. Started with Sunday school and then church, probably afternoon programs. We were very churchy but very closely-knit family.

0:03:38 My brother was the kind of guy that everybody liked. I'm not gonna say that I wasn't liked, but his personality was such that everybody knew him and liked him and everything. He was a great guy. He went to Tuskegee and played in the band. He played tuba in the band and everything. How he got to Tuskegee I'll never know, but I know one thing: he went there. He went to go to school.

0:04:11 He was in school and he went into service after he finished high school and he encouraged me to go to navy or somewhere. Don't come to the army. He didn't like the water. He didn't like going overseas, that kinda stuff, so I joined the navy. Couldn't swim a lick. I've told this story before. Here, I lived about a block in back of the natatorium. Because of race prejudice and stuff of that nature, they didn't allow the blacks to come there. Only on the Monday before they changed the water. They would change water on Monday. My mom and dad felt like we shouldn't go and they told us not to go. My dad and mom said don't do something, that was gospel. Don't do it. So I never learned to swim and my brother, he never learned to swim. Here he was, going overseas, that's why he'd get discouraged.

0:05:09 Anyway, I went to the navy; he went to the army. We stayed there—he was in there longer than I was, but anyway we got out in '46. I got out in '46 with an honorable discharge and I wanted to go to school so I chose Central State, Ohio, because I wanted to go to a black school and learn a little bit about myself and what I'm all about, you know?

0:05:40 I was in a school where I never had a black, never saw a black teacher, had no experience with blacks and I wanted to go learn a little more about myself and I think that was true of all of us. He went to Tuskegee, my sisters went to Kentucky State, and I went to Central State in Ohio. One time, we were all in school together. How my dad managed that

financially, I'll never know, but we were in school. I played basketball and I got a little basketball scholarship, so that way he didn't have to give me that much, but the rest of them, he had to meet those tuitions every so often, and I know it was a burden on him and I admire my dad. Loved him for that. He never complained, he just went on trying to make a better life for us. That was his goal in life, give his kids the opportunities that he didn't have, but that's the background.

0:06:38 My brother went to Tuskegee and finished Tuskegee. I went to Central State. All of us graduated school and everything. But he was a great guy. Not much I can say. See, the problem was—the reason I don't know too much to say about my brother except when we were small—is that I went the navy three and a half years and after I left the navy I went to Central State. They gave me a chance to play basketball and gave me a scholarship, so I went to Central State in 1946 and graduated 1950. My wife, I met her my first day on campus. A friend of hers was in the navy with me. He said, "Joe, I want you to meet a nice girl from Bowling Green, Kentucky," and we had a get-together that night, so I met Della.

0:07:38 This is fifty, sixty-two years ago? So, we went to school in 1950. At that time, like I said, for about thirteen years, I wasn't around my brother. For three years in the service, four years in Central State, then I came out of Central State, I want to coach basketball. I stayed in Kentucky, we got jobs down there, and that's the book there or something. I fell in love with teaching, I fell in love schools. I went on to be a [inaudible]. Anyway, they dedicated the yearbook to Della and I. We were about the same age as some of the guys in the class. Here I was coaching guys about the same age I was. Because I was about twenty-one, twenty-two, something like that.

0:08:36 Anyway, we fell in love with them and they loved us, so they dedicated the yearbook that year. We left in '51. I was going to Notre Dame in the summers, working on my master's. I got my master's in 1956. '54, I started, '56, summers coming back and forth. Anyway, we left Kentucky and I came to South Bend in 1954. My wife and I, they wanted to hire some black teachers in South Bend, so we were among the first two.

0:09:15 My brother, he at that time was working at Studebaker and my sister was teaching somewhere south-south and everything. I knew where I was going. I came here and started teaching. Like I said, I could talk about myself, and I know you wanna know more about him, but it's hard to talk about him—

[MT]: Right, right.

[JL]: After the adult life, because like I said, I saw very little of him because I was at Central State, the service, and then coaching. Taught in Kentucky, taught math and science and coached basketball, so for four years, I came home in the summer, I was at Notre Dame, I hadn't much time. I was trying to get the master's, working hard. I was working at Studebaker at nights, going to school in the day in the summertime, trying to finish my master's.

0:10:14 But my brother was a wonderful guy: quiet, unassuming, but very responsible. If you met him, you loved him. He was very likeable. Nothing negative could I say. One thing I can say is some of the positive things. He was a big brother to me. He was a big guy, so I was always following him around when we go out. Nobody gonna bother little Joe because big brother Alex is there. Anyway, I admired him. He was a swell guy. He was very studious. Anything else you can say?

[DL]: That's about it.

[JL]: That's about it. I'm still struggling, babe.

0:11:00 [MT]: That's okay. I think the musical part was the part that I was most curious about because, you know, you said that he liked other people and you can really tell in his photo album. He's got a ton of pictures of other people and we went through about a hundred pictures before we saw a picture of him.

[JL]: Yeah, yeah. He's very unassuming. He didn't like the limelight.

[MT]: So we didn't even know what instrument he played until we saw a program where he was the organist.

[JL]: Yeah, he played the piano. He played the tuba.

0:11:36 [MT]: So he played the tuba. Because we knew in the band he couldn't be playing the organ and marching around.

[JL]: He played the tuba and he played the piano.

[MT]: Okay. Now, did he play in church?

[JL]: No, he played, but he wasn't no organist or nothing.

[MT]: Okay.

[JL]: My sister was. She played in church, but he didn't play in the church. He was just a—do you remember what Alex played, Darling?

[DL]: No. He just played. I know he could tear up some piano. He played, you know, real well, like I dunno. I know he played in the band in Tuskegee and the service too, I guess.

0:12:14 [JL]: Yeah, he played the service band and in Tuskegee in the band. Anything else, darlin'?

[MT]: Maybe, about the family, did you have music lessons in the home or were you just self-taught?

[JL]: No, we had teachers. Regular teaches. We were taught. He was taught, sister were taught, but I was so busy trying to throw a basketball in the hoop, I never stopped long enough to learn anything. But they all took lessons. My sister plays now. She's good. She plays with the church. My older sister, she played and everything. Like I said—

0:12:55 [DL]: [inaudible] Louise got her master's at Notre Dame for music.

[JL]: Yeah, she got her master's degree at Notre Dame. Alex didn't go back to school. He went on to do something. He didn't pursue a master's. Whatever it was he was majoring in [inaudible].

[MT]: We noticed in—not just in your family but in studying the African-American community in general that music was an important part of life and there were a lot of talented folks in this area.

0:13:30 [JL]: Yes, yes. You see, look back at it, you had no other choice. You either played sports or you played music. It was a way of communicating. It was a way of letting your frustrations and things out. But you get tired of going out there and running up and down them alleys, chasing each other and things of this nature. You couldn't go anywhere. The Natatorium was closed. You had theaters, you had go up in the balcony. I never went in the—when I say "I", now, I mean my brother and all of us—we never looked down on ourselves. You may put me down, you may deny the opportunity to go here, but I felt like—

0:14:15 That's why I wanted to go to Notre Dame. That's why my brother went to Notre Dame, got his master's. Because I felt like Notre Dame's the highest

thing I saw in this area. So for eighteen, nineteen years, as a young man, Notre Dame, Notre Dame. I would go out there and sell tickets, sell papers at the football games. Everything is just like a second home. I fell in love with Notre Dame. Matter of fact, I woulda gone to Notre Dame earlier if I was good enough. I wasn't that good, but I put my hours to get me a degree from Notre Dame. I got my master's. My sister went there. She got her master's at Notre Dame and I followed right behind her.

0:14:57 We were a close family and Alex was the head of the family. My dad, he was second in command. I'll put it that way. It was a good life and we lived a good life. We respected each other, everybody respected each other and everybody, you know, just got along fine. But Alex, really, hard for me to talk about him. First time I realize it, but for the fact that I wasn't around him that much, not in his adult life. He left here, I was sixteen years old, and then for the next twelve or thirteen years, I was [inaudible] and making a life for myself.

[MT]: That's really interesting.

0:15:45 [JL]: Me talking about him is like trying to talk about somebody you—I'm glad you came because I just realized it. I really don't have that much knowledge about my brother. My sister lives about a block from me, but she'd be good for you to talk to because she loves to talk, first of all. She would know more about him. But for me, all I know about Alex is he is a great person to have to come behind because you had nothing but positive to look up to. He has that character and everything. Nothing but good, see?

0:16:29 [MT]: you've given us a lot to go on and I think, Marsha wanted to ask a couple questions that she had come up with.

[JL]: Okay, go ahead Marsha. Ask me anything you wanna ask me.

[Marsha]: So you say your brother encouraged you not to come to the army.

[JL]: Yes.

[M]: Like, when he talked to you, did he talk about the segregation in the—

[JL]: I think what he was talking to me about was he had gone overseas and he had crossed that water getting over there and he knew I had no way of swimming or things like that. He told me—I guess he thought I'd

get a good job over here somewhere in the navy or get a better chance to get a better position. But he just didn't want me coming to the army, it was a hell of a life.

0:17:18 Excuse my French, but it was a hell of a life, because it's the outside, you have to take lots of crap, and if you had some commanders or something that didn't really understand you, you got the bottom jobs. It just wasn't really what it should have been. We're all Americans, we were all in the army together, but you never woulda known it with segregation very prevalent there. You see, it was more prevalent there than it was in South Bend, especially if you had the wrong kind of commander, somebody maybe from the South or something. But anyway, he just didn't want me to come and he told me to go join the navy. He thought that was a cleaner life, nicer life. You could live, sleep in a bed every night. He just thought maybe that would be coming to me easier.

0:18:09 [M]: So were you and your brother able to receive GI benefits after the war?

[JL]: Yeah, both. I used the GI Bill to go to school. See, I went to school at Central State. Matter of fact, that was my main reason. I had a basketball scholarship and the GI Bill. The GI Bill wasn't that much, but it helped. He went to Tuskegee on the GI Bill and everything. We were both veterans, we both had served our country. We were entitled to it so we took it, but even our GI Bill.

[MT]: We did listen to your other interview, but you talk about a lot of things, your whole life. Because we're so interested in—

[JL]: Sure, ask me anything you want.

0:19:02 [MT]: World War II, we maybe just wanted to follow up on—tell us more about your experience in the Navy and those years, what you remember.

[JL]: I went to Great Lakes. Again, basketball was a privilege. I played a little basketball, so I got a chance to go to the Great Lakes and stay there for about a year. Larry Doby, the baseball player, Charles Harman, the guy who played quarterback University of Michigan, we had some great people. Some kind of way, they liked me and I got on the basketball team and I stayed there.

0:19:40 I would run home on the weekends. I'd bring some of the guys home with me. That was quite interesting, because being as close to South Bend as

the Great Lakes, I would bring them home and everything. But I stayed there about a year, a little more than a year, then I was assigned to the U.S.S. Principello. That was an oiler and I was aboard there a mechanist's mate, first class. What my job was, I had to [inaudible] the bottom of that ship.

0:20:14 Two things are turn off the steam and I had to watch them at the bottom of that ship. I enjoyed the navy. The reason I did would be my brother was right. I did get a decent place to live, I got to travel, I didn't like it when they got on that water, because sometimes you'd look up at the sea and down at the water—some kind of way they'd make you word it—but anyway it'd be rough. I was in the Atlantic, North Atlantic, and that's rough duty, because you're bouncing off and we'd take on water and fill the billows with water so the ship would cut right through it.

0:20:56 But I enjoyed it, I enjoyed the travel. We got to go to many of the foreign little countries. One thing I'll never forget, we had finished up in the Atlantic. The Germans had given up and they were gonna have peace there, but we were on our way to the Pacific. There's still the Japanese. We were going to join the Pacific Fleet. I remember we were going through the canal, Panama Canal. The word came that the Japs had given up, the Japs had quit. There was no more fight. The guys were so happy, we blew all the steam off the ship. We had to sit there and build all the steam up so we could go through the locks and come back. Glad I didn't have to go to the Pacific because they said it was kinda rough over there. You got lots of fighting. So I was glad it had never materialized.

0:21:49 I stayed there three and a half years. I had two years of sea duty and a year, like I said, Great Lakes. I really enjoyed it. I was adventurous, eyes wide open, looking at everything, taking everything in over two and a half years. But I really enjoyed it and everything. I never was mistreated that I know of in the navy. I was treated nice and people from all over treated me nice and everything. But I did have some incidents that I didn't like everything, that I never forget. Some things, but as always, an enjoyable experience and everything.

0:22:35 That made my mind up right then, that I gotta do better in my life. I had to do something. I wanted to be something. I was good at math. I said, "I've seen so much destruction and devastation." I said, "what I'm gonna do in life is I'm gonna be engineer." And then I went to Central State and I stayed there three and half years and my senior year, the counselor called me in. He said, "you know there's no black engineers in the United States

and you're not gonna get a job." He said, "you're gonna have to go into something else."

0:23:12 He mentioned he thought teaching would be best and I said, "well fine. If I can't be an engineer, I'm gonna teach some of these youngsters to go on and be something like engineers and things of that nature, see?" So, I did, but I had to come out and transferred my senior year at Central State and I could easily get into teaching. And so I got into teaching. But I was gonna be an engineer and I thought wasn't any problem I couldn't work. That's how cocky I was, I really was. Algebra, advanced calculus, all those things, but I was a good student and then I thought that I could be a good engineer.

0:24:04 I wanted to build what I'd seen destroyed. Some of the countries you would see how much devastation had taken place and everything. I just knew it. But I forgot one thing. Those were countries—that wasn't the United States! So here I was, trying to be something that there were no others—black engineers—but I was looking at what I was seeing and thinking that I could be a part of building it back up. But it wasn't like that, so I changed it. Then I couldn't go pursue my dream. My dream was to be an engineer. I had degrees and everything I needed to be that. I'd be a halfway decent engineer, but I just never had the opportunity.

0:24:49 I didn't fret. I had a wife. I was happy, so I thought what I'm gonna do is make the best of it. So I came back to South Bend, I been here, and I've had wonderful, wonderful experiences here. I've had every kind of honor you could name. From the president on down, I've received honors for schools. My goal in school was to get the kids, black and white, to learn to live together and know what they had to do in order to be together. We worked at that hard to the staff.

0:25:25 When I became principal, we'd have the staff, white staff, come over here on Fridays and socialize and do everything, but we did it together, just live together, as people should. That's what we did for the last twenty years, I guess, of my teaching, was to make sure that experiences that I had would never block me and make a positive out of a negative, and that's what we did. I'm the principal here for twenty-three years and those twenty-three years were really enjoyable.

0:26:00 So I have no regrets. I don't want to make it sound like South Bend was a rotten place; it was not. That was the time. In those times, that's what it is. Today's door's wide open; you can be anything you wanna be. I told my son, grandson that and that's what they followed, pursuing things. That's

why they're [inaudible]. But I don't wanna sound negative. I don't want you to make it negative, but my negatives made my positive and my positive was going to have a good life as a teacher and a principal. I wouldn't trade it now for a million dollars.

0:26:38 See, I'm glad I went the way I did. I got a friend, believe it or not, he's a millionaire. He'd teach and now he lives in Detroit. He was a student and I was the teacher and coach, but he calls me up. Every time we go near Detroit, we gotta get ahold of him, he takes us out for dinner and all these other things. But it's just amazing and what they have advanced, developed from the experiences we've had.

0:27:10 And my wife of sixty-two years, she's been beautiful. She's been beautiful. She's just followed me around. She let me get all the glory and yet she came to South Bend, started the first daycare centers in South Bend. Her daycares received honors and everything, but she never got credit, she never was—always in the background! Seemed like I was out front. 'Come in here, we're gonna do this, won't be honored doing this!' But at the same time, they didn't know in my house I had somebody pushing me, and that's my wife. She's been a beautiful person for sixty-two years. I'm sick now and she treats me like I'm a baby.

0:27:55 [MT]: She's your caregiver. Well, I know how important that is. I have a lucky husband who supports me in my career and I love being a teacher, so I know—

[JL]: Oh, are you a teacher?

[MT]: I'm a college professor.

[JL]: Oh, a professor.

[MT]: Yeah. And I love my students. I love Marsha and I love seeing young people learn and grow and develop and go on in their careers and I know how important that is. And I know you've made an impact in this community. That's very clear.

0:28:30 [JL]: Marsha, what's your background? You from South Bend?

[M]: No, I'm from Grand Rapids, Michigan.

[JL]: Really? My best friends live in Grand Rapids.

[DL]: You say Grand Rapids?

[M]: Mm-hmm.

[DL]: Oh, man.

[JL]: My roommate in college, a good basketball player. I couldn't play, but he was good. You know the Eaddys? E-D-D-Y-A? He went back there and taught. He coached and about three years ago his team won the state tournament in Grand Rapids. What school was that, Della?

[DL]: What, in Grand Rapids?

[JL]: With Jim—Yeah, Jim.

0:29:00 [DL]: I don't know what high school it was.

[JL]: Well, what high school you go to?

[M]: I went to Central and Ottawa Hills High Schools.

[JL]: Well, he's from Grand Rapids, comes to see us all the time. And his daughter—he got a grown daughter—to her, we're an aunt and uncle. Uncle Joe and Aunt Della. She calls all the time, see how we're doing and everything. But she's in Grand Rapids. Yeah. How'd you get to Saint Mary's?

0:29:31 [M]: Oh, I'm actually a student at Indiana University South Bend.

[JL]: Indiana University.

[M]: Mm-hmm. And I came out here because my cousin, him and his wife is a pastor out here, so they encouraged me to come out here.

[JL]: Oh, I see. I see. You like it?

[M]: Yeah. It's a smaller city, but the college is inexpensive. It's great. It's not a big university [inaudible]

[JL]: Right, right, right.

[M]: But, I live on campus; it's convenient for me. I love the teachers, my roommate, so it's a change, but—

0:30:04 [JL]: Yeah. Great, great. Well, keep it up, keep it up, and go on. Let that be a stepping stone for you. You go on pursuing whatever career you're looking for.

[M]: History. I'm actually—I just changed my major to history.

[JL]: Is that right?

[M]: And I want to be a history professor.

[JL]: Oh great, great. You'll be a good one. Don't forget I told you.

[M]: All right.

[MT]: Well you know, speaking of basketball, I have another student who is writing about Central High School and the fact that that was an integrated team and looking at the experience of African-Americans at Central High School in basketball, so I don't know if you have any memories you would like to share about being at the basketball team at Central.

0:30:54 [JL]: Johnny Wooden. You ever heard of Mr. Wooden?

[MT]: Yes, we have.

[JL]: Johnny Wooden was the coach when I was there. Wonderful person and everything, and he always made us walk the chalk line. He was a good disciplinarian; he was fair; he was just a beautiful person. Like I said, at Central, I didn't have trouble with the teachers. It was just the fact that they just didn't have any black teachers. The teachers that were fair and wonderful and he was a coach—our coach—and he treated us great and in all my experiences, I have never known that I was black when that's just how I've been an adult.

0:31:35 As for my relationship with my colleagues in the schools and things, I've had much loyalty and much respect for me as their boss or whatever you wanna call it. Everything had been fair. It's just the times. Just the times. At that time, that's the way it was. If you didn't weather, you fell off on the side. If you might have never got to school, never got to go on to be something, but it was just the times.

0:32:06 But I don't want to make it sound like—I'm glad I'm black because the experiences I've had as a black person coming up has made me what I

am. Everyone. And whatever I am. It has been the cause of me being what I am. Sometimes I get down, when I was back there ten, fifteen, twenty years ago. I was about to say “age old”, but I—look, you come a long, long way. You don’t stop here. You keep going. Something to discourage you will happen or something, but as I say, “life has been beautiful to me” and—

0:32:41 I just want to make a song, but I have to bring out—you asked me and I try to give you a little background. Said everything that was—especially my brother. I’m sorry I can’t tell you more about him because he’s a great guy and if I had more, I’d tell you more.

[MT]: Maybe you can identify a couple of the people in the photographs. That might be helpful.

[JL]: Okay.

[MT]: Some are from his unit and you may not know them, but I think some might be family or friends. And I’ll just bring this closer and Marsha, if you could take some notes while we’re doing that, we can go from here. [noise] Bring me another notebook. I’ll grab that.

0:33:31 [JL]: I’ll put this stool here and—

[MT]: Yeah. That would be good. Now where’s our folder?

[JL]: Close to Marsha.

[MT] There it is. [inaudible] piece of paper. Yeah, turn one of those over. We’ll just take some notes and we’ll bring another stool over and we’ll both sit down. Do you want to come close so you can see what photos... [noise] And our recorder is still— [noise] Yes. Hello. Make sure you were still recording. [noise] Make sure you have enough light here. It’s kinda fragile.

0:34:29 [JL]: Okay. I’ll hold it while you turn it.

[MT]: Should we put that down over there... Let’s see here. Like I said, most of the time, he wrote the name down for his band. His band and things like that, but when we get in here to some of the loose ones. There’s a program; that’s where we learned he was an organist. And sometimes we have news from South Bend. That’s interesting. Now let’s see, who’s that? It’s kind of a wild photo, someone goofing off.

0:35:29 [JL]: Della, can you recognize him? I don't know.

[DL]: I don't know who that is.

[JL]: Some of these pictures look familiar.

[MT]: Uh-huh.

[DL]: Uh-uh.

[MT]: Okay, thank you. That may have been one of his army buddies.

[JL] Yes, Paul Harvey.

[MT]: Now, a couple folks are swimming, or learning to swim.

0:36:10 [JL] Yes. I thought that's my brother, but it's not him.

[MT]: [inaudible] Now this lady—

[JL]: She looks familiar. Is that her name?

[MT]: No name on there. I'll take it over to the sleeve.

[DL]: I could have gotten up.

0:36:41 [MT] That's okay. This lady over here?

[JL]: She look familiar to you, Dell?

[DL]: Mm-mm. Face is familiar, but I couldn't tell you a name.

[MT]: Okay.

[JL]: We're getting old, forgetful.

[DL]: Face looks familiar.

[JL]: I said we're getting old.

[DL]: "Getting"?

[MT]: Okay, thank you. Now, here's some young people. This is where it gets interesting.

0:37:20 [JL]: Who is that? It's—looks like moon man on the end.

[DL]: Why am I looking anyway? I didn't go down there. [sneeze] here!

[MT]: We don't know where they're from, so...

0:37:50 [JL]: Yeah, hopefully you recognize somebody. My brother had good taste, too.

[DL]: That kinda look like Tom Taylor right there. I don't know if it is or not.

[MT]: We know who that is. Uh-huh.

[JL]: I even know where that is.

[DL]: I don't know.

0:38:21 [JL]: We're not much help to you.

[MT]: Alright, well, it might get better. We saw somebody at Tuskegee, so...

[DL]: Your classmates? Your classmates?

[JL]: Classmates? My classmates would never be his classmates. What I mean is he's about three years ahead of me. When I went to school with classmates, he was gone in the service.

[MT]: Now did you know him? He's from South Bend.

[JL]: Yeah. Mitchell. It's Ida's brother.

0:38:51 [DL]: Who?

[JL]: Mitchell. Ida Mitchell.

[DL]: Oh.

[MT]: It's Ida's brother?

[JL]: Yeah.

[MT]: Yeah, that's good to know. We didn't know how he was related to Ida. Thank you. Go ahead and write that down: "Ida Mitchem's Brother."

[DL]: Okay.

[MT]: Thank you. That's good.

[JL]: I recognized one person. Gee!

[DL]: It looks like one of my old photograph books.

0:39:23 [MT] Now does it look like your brother might be in this one?

[JL]: He's not on here.

[MT]: Okay. Like I said, he isn't in most of them.

[JL]: No, no. Those are army pictures, there. I'm sure these kids could be from anywhere.

[MT]: Now did he like photography? Did you notice him taking pictures before he left?

[JL]: He liked music.

[MT]: Okay.

[JL]: Art and music.

0:39:55 [MT]: Well, I guess just like the rest of us, he wanted a photo album.

[JL]: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Where'd he get that?

[MT]: Well, it says "The Service Album". Probably, they were selling them.

[JL]: Ah.

[MT]: But it looks like he took most of the pictures.

[JL]: Oh, I see.

[MT]: Okay, now this I know is at Tuskegee, because I see the Booker T. Washington statue.

[JL]: Yeah.

[MT]: And he is, I believe, in that picture.

[JL]: Yeah, that's him on the end. I never saw the campus, but he said it's a beautiful place

0:40:31 [MT]: That must be his classmates from Tuskegee.

[DL]: Let me see that.

[MT]: Tuskegee friends.

[DL]: It looks like him on the end there.

[MT]: Okay. Good.

[DL]: Sure looks like him on the end.

[JL]: That is him there.

[DL]: Mm-hmm.

0:41:06 [MT]: Now, okay, this is a trick question: is that you in the navy photo?

[JL]: Yes.

[MT]: Okay.

[JL]: Ask me. [Inaudible] by a year?

[MT]: It's faded a little bit. We have a better picture of you that you let us scan when you did the Trailblazers.

[JL]: Is that right?

[MT]: So we have a better picture.

0:41:36 [JL]: Glad you do. I didn't get to the Trailblazers as I had problems. I didn't get to go to the last Trailblazers.

[MT]: I'm sorry.

[JL]: Yeah.

[MT]: You recognize this young man?

0:42:10 [JL]: [inaudible] Looks like my grandson. But no, he's not. Who's that there?

[DL]: I don't know, but that sure looks familiar.

[JL]: Sure looks familiar.

[DL]: You know who that is?

[MT]: No. No name, nothing.

[DL]: I don't know. It's familiar.

[JL]: Young kid, whoever he is.

[MT]: Now this one says Mishawaka, 1951. What do you think that is?

0:42:46 [JL]: 1951?

[MT]: Yeah, but doesn't mean that it was in Mishawaka. Just the photography, it was developed in Mishawaka.

[JL]: Oh, I see.

[DL]: You in Kentucky, Joe. '51.

[JL]: Yeah.

[MT]: Oh, okay.

[JL]: I remember that.

[MT]: Somebody's graduating.

[JL]: Yeah.

[MT]: And I thought it could be you.

[JL]: See, he's out of school, then.

[DL]: Is this Tuskegee?

[JL]: No, that's Mishawaka.

[MT]: Well, on the back of the photo it says where he got it developed was Mishawaka, but it could have been anywhere.

0:43:24 [DL]: That looks like him right there. That looks like Alex. Alexander.

[JL]: [inaudible]

[MT]: It could have been Tuskegee with the year.

[DL]: It look like kind of a campus.

[MT]: It's a campus-looking place. I mean, graduation robes and it looks like old dorms.

[JL]: Yeah, I think this is Tuskegee graduation.

[MT]: Okay. That's a good guess. '51.

[JL]: '51. Yeah, see '51 is about when he—let's see. He was two or three years ahead of me.

0:44:00 [DL]: Did he graduate before you or after you? You don't remember, do you?

[JL]: He graduated before me.

[DL]: Before?

[JL]: Yes. We both got out of service about the same time.

[MT]: Okay.

[JL]: Sorry we couldn't be any more help.

[MT]: That's it. Now did you want to show us something in this book?

[DL]: Oh, it's just on the first page.

[JL]: Oh, it's just the dedication. He felt so proud of me. Dedication.

0:44:41 [MT]: Oh, that is beautiful.

[JL]: It's been dedicated to me. Look what they said. There were four of them.

[MT]: Oh, that is beautiful.

[JL]: Somebody would call us like you go and cross.

[MT]: Western. Western echos, and then what's this one.

[JL]: The high school was Western Kentucky

[MT]: Okay. Were you leaving after that?

0:45:14 [JL]: See, I come to South Bend in a year and the year before, they gave [inaudible]

[DL]: We stayed down there four years.

[JL]: See, that's the first year in South Bend. But they dedicate the yearbook to us and they sent us a yearbook. I thought that was awful nice of them to send us a yearbook. And make that dedication.

0:45:53 [MT]: Well, thank you so much—

[JL]: Oh, it's alright.

[MT]: For speaking with us today. I really appreciate it.

[JL]: I'm sorry I couldn't be more help with my brother.

[MT]: Oh, no. It's been great. This is great. And thank you, Mrs. Luten.

[DL]: Thank you for coming out.

[MT]: Thank you.

[DL]: Okay.

[M]: It was great to meet you after transcribing your life story.

[JL]: If you get a chance, and I know you're busy.

[M]: It was nice to meet you.

[JL]: You want more information—that's the reason you came—try my sisters.

[MT]: I will.

[JL]: She knows all about visas.

[DL]: I don't know about [noise]

[MT]: If you think it's okay.

0:46:33 [MT]: You ask her and then I'll call you, okay? How's that? You know.

[DL]: She doesn't have any more information, you know.

[MT]: But Mrs. Luten, I would like to come and talk to you just about your preschool because I'm very interested in early childhood education and Head Start, so if you wouldn't mind me coming for an hour and talking with you, I would like to—

0:47:04 [JL]: Oh, that's good.

[DL]: I don't mind talking, but I don't do interviews.

[JL]: [inaudible]

[DL]: Stay out. One in the family's enough.

[MT]: One's enough.

[DL]: One's enough.

[JL]: I'm glad she's coming [inaudible].

[DL]: Times have changed so, you know. Since I was in the business, but I got into it because the kids needed to be prepared for kindergarten.

0:47:33 [MT]: Right.

[DL]: And they were coming into the schools and that wasn't happening.

[JL, talking over DL]: She was teaching first grade.

[DL] So I decided to open my own daycare. As a matter of fact, it was the first black daycare in the state of Indiana. Privately, you know.

[MT]: Mm-hmm.

[DL]: Daycare center. The difference of a daycare center and a daycare, a daycare center, you have to have forty kids or more.

[MT]: Yeah.

[DL]: That's what I had. But daycare, you have ten kids in your home. It's a difference.

0:48:08 [JL]: You come and talk to us sometime.

[DL]: No. No no no no no no.

[MT]: Well, you think about it. I don't want to force anybody to do anything.

[DL]: Pictures, interviews, you enough.

[JL]: No. No no no.

[MT]: You think about it. Maybe I could just take notes.

[DL]: Fine, fine, fine.

[JL]: You got a story. Tell her your story.

[MT]: I'll think about the—

[DL]: I don't have a story.

[JL]: Yes you do. You don't realize it—

[MT]: Everybody has a story, that's for sure. That's for sure. I tried to write down about—it's harder to get the women. It is. I teach women's history and I have a harder time. I have a harder time getting the women to tell their stories. I wanted to do Mrs.—I heard from the children of Bernard and

Odie Mae Streets, you know, that she was involved with Head Start, but then nobody wrote it down and nobody recorded it and all I have is one picture.

0:49:04 [JL]: I don't why she's so—doesn't want to talk.

[MT]: So anyway—

[DL]: The only story I have is that—and I know this is never mentioned, Joe—is when we came to South Bend and he got on the school system and then I was hired. Schools were still segregated and—remember? In other words, we, you and I, integrated another school here in South Bend, Oliver School—Oliver School.

[MT]: Right.

0:49:35 [DL]: A man and wife, they moved to Oliver from Linden

[JL]: Told us why, too.

[DL]: Huh?

[JL]: He told us why.

[MT]: Uh-huh.

[JL]: He sent us Doctor Charlie.

[MT]: Uh-huh.

[DL]: Doctor Charlie? Right, right, right.

[JL]: I'll send you two, so you can cry on each other's shoulders. [laughter] He was joking, but we went to that Oliver School together and those kids were beautiful.

[MT]: Aww, that's—

[Audio ends]